

Summary of differences between the 2004 and 2006 Science Program PSP's

1) Timeline: following the release of the 2006 PSP it is estimated that proposals will be funded almost twice as quickly as the 2004 PSP (the first signed grant agreements should be in place within 9 months following the PSP opening date) due to a shorter PSP application period, and a greatly accelerated review and funding process.

2) Topic focus:

- The 2006 PSP has a more defined focus for the research topic priorities than the 2004 PSP. The tighter focus is designed to assist resource managers and applicants by more accurately identifying immediate priorities.
- The 2006 PSP used a Selection Panel comprised of agency representatives, stakeholders, and independent scientists to choose the high priority research topics for the PSP. This process engages the CALFED community up front, prior to the release of the PSP, to ensure agreement on the priorities rather than waiting until the last step in the review process (see the Review section below).

3) General organization and size: the 2006 PSP is organized differently than the 2004 PSP in an attempt to make the application process more clear. Additionally, many parts of the 2006 PSP have been abbreviated into a more concise and digestible document.

4) On-line forms:

- a. Project Information Form – the 2006 PSP involves a reduced and restricted number of keywords to make it easier for applicants to fill out the form;
- b. Task Table – the 2006 task table requires budget totals by task rather than deliverables;
- c. Detailed Budget Form - the 2006 PSP will allow applicants much more flexibility to decide how to construct their budget. This year applicants will be able to upload a PDF version of their budget rather than fill out a cumbersome on-line form.
- d. Schedule of Deliverables – new to the 2006 PSP, this form replaces the deliverables column in the old task table of the 2004 PSP. A list of required minimum deliverables is provided.
- e. This year the Science Program has provided a mechanism for applicants to provide letters of support with their applications.

5) Document Format

The 2006 PSP provides more guidance on the structure of proposals than the 2004 PSP; the 2006 PSP provides an outline that indicates what major sections should include what specific items (e.g. hypotheses, objectives, scope, etc). The major proposal sections include the Project Purpose, Background, Approach, Feasibility, Relevance, Qualifications, and Literature Cited sections. This structure is intended to make it easier for applicants to construct proposals and easier for reviewers to evaluate them.

6) Review

Like the 2004 PSP, submitted proposals to the 2006 PSP will undergo a rigorous technical review process consisting of an administrative review, followed by 3 external independent technical reviews, and a Technical Synthesis Panel (TSP). The TSP will look at all previous reviews and directly compare proposals to give each proposal a summary rating. Unlike the 2004 PSP, the 2006 PSP will not use a Selection Panel following the TSP; the TSP will be the final review step for the 2006 PSP and make final funding recommendations to the California Bay-Delta Authority. The 2006 PSP used a Selection Panel to chose the priorities prior to opening the PSP rather than using a Selection Panel to state the priorities at the end of the PSP. The absence of a Selection Panel following the TSP saves roughly 3 months of proposal review time.

7) Funding:

To help meet a balance of CALFED needs, eliminate the need for a Selection Panel at the end of the review process, and illustrate to applicants the commitment of the Science Program to each of the research priorities identified for the 2006 PSP, the funding for each topic has been allocated by the Selection Panel up front; each of the four priority research topics will receive a minimum of \$1 million. Like the 2004 PSP, no inadequate proposals will be funded.

8) Approval

As of July 1, 2006 the implementing agency for the CALFED Science Program is the Resources Agency. For the 2006 PSP, final funding approval must be given by the Resources Agency rather than the Authority. The Authority will make funding recommendations to the Resources Agency. Although this adds an additional step in the funding approval process the Science Program does not anticipate any significant delays.